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1-22. (CANCELED)

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

carrying out a first downshifting operation ~~[[in]]~~ during a coasting mode;   
terminating ~~downshifts in~~ the first downshifting operation by engagement   
of a clutch located between a vehicle drive motor and the transmission;   
~~determining attainment of and, if a speed of the vehicle falls below a~~   
predetermined threshold speed, ~~[[and]]~~ carrying out a second downshifting operation   
by downshifting at least two gears without re-engaging the clutch; and   
terminating ~~downshifts in~~ the second downshifting operation by engaging   
[[with]] the clutch located between the vehicle drive motor and the transmission   
~~maintained in a disengaged state.~~

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of carrying out the second downshifting operation only during a continually disengaged clutch, if a reasonably great probability exists that a driver has a desire for positive drive torque as well as desiring uninterrupted travel.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of determining the desire for positive drive torque by an indicator.

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 24, further comprising the step of indicating the desire for positive drive torque by one or more of[[.]]:

releasing operative brakes,   
deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel, and   
using a steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 26, further comprising the step of determining a driver's desire for positive drive torque by way of overstepping of the steering angle as compared to a predetermined steering angle.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of using, for a determination of the probability of the driver's wish for a positive torque, two or more of named indicators or other indicators in common.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of preventing the second downshifting operation if operational brakes are activated.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of engaging the clutch ~~for termination of~~ to terminate the second

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downshifting operation only when a power control member of the motor vehicle is activated.

31. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of always terminating engagement of a starting gear of the automatic transmission at the end of the second downshifting operation with a disengaged clutch.

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 23, further comprising the step of selecting gear jumps during the ~~transmission~~ downshifting dependent on vehicle deceleration. ♦♦

33. (CANCELED) ♦♦

34. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

carrying out a first downshifting operation ~~[[in]]~~ during a coasting mode of the automatic transmission from a higher gear to a lower gear by~~[[:]]~~ ♦♦

opening ~~disengaging~~ a clutch ~~located~~ between the automatic transmission and a vehicle engine; ♦♦

shifting from the higher gear to the lower gear in the automatic transmission; and

terminating the first downshifting operation by closing ~~engaging~~ the clutch ~~located~~ between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine so that engine compression influences the vehicle; ♦♦

determining attainment of ~~and if the vehicle falls below~~ a threshold speed; ♦♦

carrying out a second downshifting operation of the automatic transmission ~~through a succession of downshifts~~ by~~[[:]]~~ ♦♦

opening ~~disengaging~~ the clutch ~~located~~ between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine; ♦♦

~~downshifting from the higher lower gear to [[the]] a first next lower gear in the automatic transmission and subsequently downshifting from the first next lower gear to a second next lower gear while maintaining the clutch, located between the automatic transmission and the vehicle engine, in an open state disengaged during each successive shift in the second downshifting operation;~~ ♦♦

determining a driver desire for positive drive torque; and

terminating the second downshifting operation by closing ~~engaging~~ the clutch ~~between the vehicle engine and the transmission carrying out the second downshifting operation.~~ ♦♦

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35. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 34, further comprising the step of determining the driver desire for positive drive torque by identifying at least one of:

- releasing operative brakes,
- deflecting an activation lever for a direction of travel; and
- a predetermined steering angle of a vehicle steering mechanism; and
- activation of a power control member.

36. (NEW) A method of operating an automatic transmission of a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

- disengaging a clutch located between a vehicle drive motor and a transmission;

- downshifting from a higher gear to a next lower gear of the automatic transmission;

- re-engaging the clutch with the next lower gear;

- providing motor braking of the vehicle, via the next lower gear of the automatic transmission, until the vehicle attains a minimum threshold speed for the vehicle;

- in the event that a speed of the vehicle falls below the threshold speed for the vehicle, then:

- disengaging the clutch;

- downshifting from the next lower gear to a second next lower gear without re-engaging the clutch and, in the event that the speed of the vehicle falls further below the threshold speed;

- downshifting from the second next lower gear to a third next lower gear while the clutch still remains disengaged; and

- eventually re-engaging the clutch to terminate the downshift.